

Memorandum

To: Pine Mountain Project File

Date: April 7, 2015
Telephone: (916) 324-1639
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From: Christina Snow, Senior Environmental Planner, California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection

Subject: Addendum to Pine Mountain Fire Station Relocation Project Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND), Tulare County, California

This memorandum documents an addendum to the Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Pine Mountain Forest Fire Station (FFS) Relocation Project. Section 15164(b) of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines states that an Addendum to an adopted MND may be prepared if only minor technical changes or additions are necessary or none of the conditions described in Section 15162 (calling for the preparation of a subsequent Environmental Impact Report or Negative Declaration) apply. This MND Addendum demonstrates that the environmental analysis, impacts, and mitigation requirements identified in the original declaration (November 2009) remain substantively unchanged by the modification described herein or the passage of time, and supports the finding that the proposed activity does not raise any new issues and does not exceed the level of impacts identified in the MND.

BACKGROUND

The Pine Mountain FFS was identified as a facility that does not meet current health and safety or building codes. CAL FIRE is proposing to relocate the existing fire station facilities, located along Hot Springs Road west of the community of California Hot Springs, to a new site located immediately southwest of the intersection of Hot Springs Road and Old Hot Springs Road in southern Tulare County. The new site is approximately five acres in size. As the lead agency, CAL FIRE prepared an IS/MND for the Pine Mountain FFS Relocation Project pursuant to CEQA in November 2009 that was adopted on November 12, 2009 (State Clearing House # 2009101004). The IS/MND was prepared to address construction-level and operational impacts of the Pine Mountain FFS Relocation Project. The IS/MND evaluated potential environmental effects on aesthetics, agriculture and forestry resources, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, geology and soils, greenhouse gas emissions, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, land use and planning, mineral resources, noise, population and housing, public services, recreation, transportation and traffic, and utilities and service systems. All impacts in the IS/MND can be mitigated to below a level of significance through implementation of mitigation measures.

Shortly after the IS/MND was approved, CAL FIRE suspended most project-related activities due to lack of funding. The Pine Mountain project was among several projects put on hold until available funding could be identified.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed project has changed slightly with regard to project design and square footage since the original IS/MND was approved. However, the revised project will remain relatively

consistent with the original project, and the project's mitigation measures will remain valid and applicable to the revised project.

The original project description identified the following components:

- A 3,134 square-foot barracks-mess hall.
- A 1,664 square-foot apparatus building.

The project now proposes a single building consisting of 6,054 square feet. Additionally, the project as revised includes the following components:

- A generator-storage building (648 square feet).
- A water treatment building (175 square feet).

The project elements remain the same with regard to the septic tank and leach field, two water tanks, utilities, hose wash rack, fencing, flagpoles, trash enclosure, curb, gutters and sidewalks, site lighting, landscaping and irrigation, and the installation of a storm drainage system.

The original document indicated that two interior live oaks would be removed and three-to-four blue oaks would be trimmed. However, four additional live oak trees will need to be removed on the project site. The site plan layout has been revised due to site constraints (see Figure 2), and additional trees need to be removed to ensure that sight distance is maintained for the driveway ingress and egress safety onto Hot Springs Road. The following mitigation measures from the previous IS/MND are still applicable and will be implemented prior to tree removal:

BATS

- Any medium or larger (\geq 12-inch diameter) trees or snags that are selected for removal shall be inspected by a qualified wildlife biologist for presence of foliage-roosting bats (western red bat [*Lasiurus blossevillii*] and hoary bat [*Lasiurus cinereus*]) and potential roosts (cavities, entrance holes) suitable for other special-status bats, including pallid bat (*Antrozous pallidus*) and Townsend's big-eared bat (*Corynorhinus townsendii*). Cavities suitable as special-status bat roosts will be examined for roosting bats using a portable camera probe or similar technology. If present, special-status bat roosts (including day roosts, hibernacula, and maternity colonies) shall be flagged and construction activities shall be avoided within a minimum buffer of 250 feet surrounding each occupied roost.
- If the site is being used as a winter roost, the action shall not take place during the period of hibernation (1 November to 1 March). If the site is being used as a maternity colony, the action shall not occur during the maternity roost season (1 April to 31 August). If a non-maternity bat roost is found within the proposed project, the roosting bats shall be safely evicted under the direction of a qualified biologist with an existing Memorandum of Understanding with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). The qualified biologist shall facilitate the removal of roosting bats by opening the roosting area to allow airflow through the cavity or building (air flow disturbance) for a period of 24 hours at dusk.

MIGRATORY BIRDS

- Tree-felling to take place within the project area will occur during the non-nesting season for migratory birds. This period will be from September 1 through January 30.
- Tree-felling to take place within the project area during the potential nesting period for migratory birds (February 1 through August 31), shall be preceded by a nesting bird survey no later than two weeks prior to vegetation removal and completed within the area of potential effect by a qualified biologist, forester, or ornithologist. If any nesting

activity within the project area is identified, CAL FIRE shall consult with CDFW to develop protection measures.

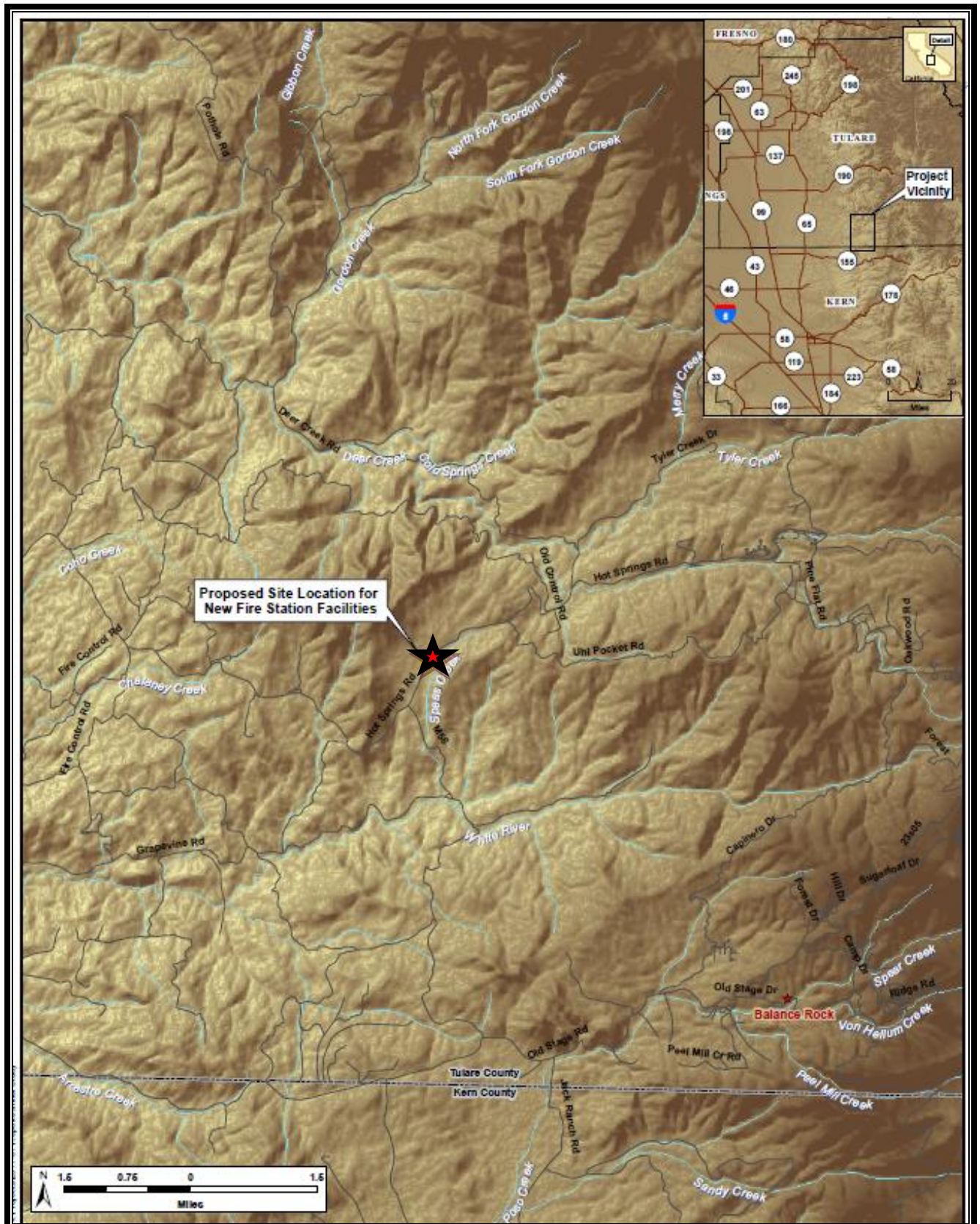
CAL FIRE has prepared this addendum to the IS/MND per 14 CCR § 15164(b). It documents the necessary change in which none of the conditions described in PRC § 21166 or 14 CCR § 15162 calling for preparation of a subsequent IS/MND have occurred. CAL FIRE has chosen not to prepare a subsequent IS/MND for the following reasons:

1. It will not result in substantial changes to the project that will require major revisions of the IS/MND due to the involvement of new significant environmental effects or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified significant effects.
2. It will not result in substantial changes with respect to the circumstances under which the project is undertaken that will require major revisions of the IS/MND due to the involvement of new significant environmental effects or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified significant effects.
3. It does not constitute new information of substantial importance, which was not known and could not have been known with the exercise of reasonable diligence at the time the IS/MND was certified as complete, and none of the following is applicable:
 - A. The project will have one or more significant effects not discussed in the IS/MND.
 - B. Significant effects previously examined will be substantially more severe than shown in the IS/MND.
 - C. Mitigation measures or alternatives previously found not to be feasible would in fact be feasible, and would substantially reduce one or more significant effects of the project, but the project proponents decline to adopt the mitigation measure or alternative.
 - D. Mitigation measures which are considerably different from those analyzed in the previous IS/MND would substantially reduce one or more significant effects on the environment, but the project proponents decline to adopt the mitigation measure or alternative.
 - E. It does not constitute new information, which was not known and could not have been known at the time the environmental impact report was certified as complete.

Based on the information provided above, the proposed modifications and current site conditions would not result in an increase in environmental impacts over what was previously analyzed. The current site conditions, or modified project, would not result in a substantial change in the conclusions and analysis included in the IS/MND. In addition, all mitigation measures identified in the prior IS/MND are still applicable and will be implemented accordingly.

Cc: Mr. Curt Karlin, CAL FIRE Sacramento
Mr. Chris Browder, CAL FIRE Sacramento
Mrs. Rebecca Beauchene, CAL FIRE Sacramento

Figure 1. Project Location



"The Department of Forestry and Fire Protection serves and safeguards the people and protects the property and resources of California."

Figure 2. Site Plan



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